

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed February 24, 2003, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-11, 13-21, and 23-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Greinke et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,582,811) ("Greinke") in view of Matsumoto et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,505,929) ("Matsumoto"). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

As the Examiner noted in the Office Action, Greinke does not teach a temperature above 1700°C. The Examiner cited Matsumoto as teaching higher temperatures of purification to remedy the defects of Greinke.

Applicant respectfully submits that Matsumoto is directed to a sequentially ordered process of baking a carbon material, graphitizing the material, and purifying the material. (Matsumoto, Abstract.) In addition, Matsumoto teaches the sequential process in a single furnace, so that the process can be carried out by raising or decreasing the temperature in a continuous manner in a single furnace. (Matsumoto, col. 6, line 64 to col. 7, line 4.)

Applicant respectfully submits that there is no motivation or suggestion to combine the higher temperatures of the unique Matsumoto process of baking, graphitizing, and purifying in a sequential order with the unrelated process of Greinke. Also, Matsumoto does not teach or suggest the desirability of expanding a graphite material as recited in Applicant's independent Claims 1, 13, and 24. Applicant respectfully submits that Matsumoto's sequential process in a single furnace would not be able to accommodate the expanding step as recited in Applicant's independent Claims 1, 13, and 24.

Dependent Claims 2-11, 14-21, 23, and 25-27 are dependent upon allowable independent Claims 1, 13, and 24, and are allowable for at least the same reasons.

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection to Claims 1-11, 13-21, and 23-27.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 12 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Greinke and Matsumoto, and further in view of Junittila (U.S. Patent No. 4,533,086) ("Junittila"). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

The Examiner cited Junittila for disclosing a method of grinding graphite materials.

Applicant respectfully submits that Junittila does not remedy the defects of Greinke and Matsumoto discussed above regarding independent Claims 1 and 13. In addition, Application respectfully submits that there is no motivation or suggestion to combine the grinding of Junittila with the processes of Greinke and Matsumoto as suggested by the Examiner.

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection to Claims 12 and 22.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that all claims now pending patentably define the subject invention over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance, and such action is earnestly solicited at the earliest possible date.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2666 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,
BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR & ZAFMAN LLP

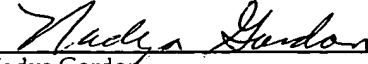
Dated: 5/27/03


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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING:

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited on the date shown below with sufficient postage as First Class Mail with the United States Postal Service in an envelope addressed to:
Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.


Nadya Gordon
Date 5/27/03